

PANDEMIC

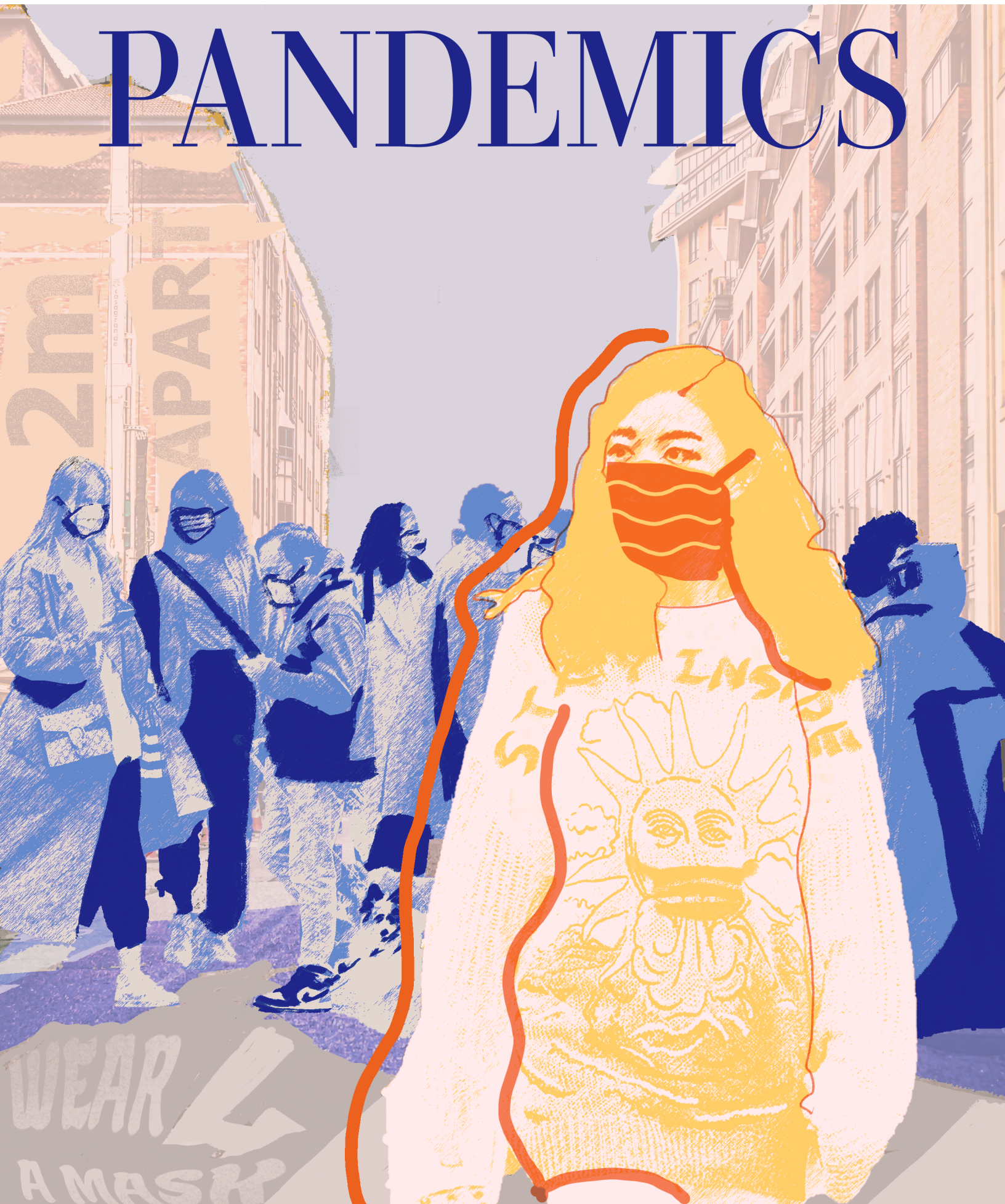


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Acknowledgements artwork by Eva Murcia



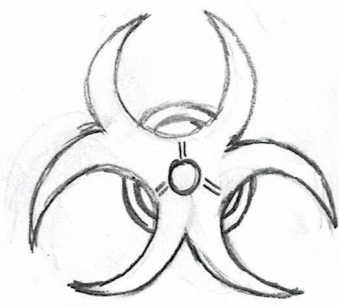
A Pandemic Pocketbook

pan·dem·ic: (of a disease)
prevalent over a whole country
or the world.

mask: a covering which fits over
the nose and mouth, and worn to
prevent infection.

social distancing: a set of
measures intended to prevent
the spread of a contagious
disease by maintaining a physical
distance between people.





No Safety In Numbers

In this creepy and intense novel, an entire shopping mall is quarantined after a mysterious bioweapon is released in the building. The story follows the point of view of several teenagers as the situation in the mall becomes increasingly dire, with people becoming sick and panic ensuing. I recommend this chilling story to anyone looking for a thrilling and engaging book to read - and its sequels, *No Easy Way Out* and *No Dawn Without Darkness*.

"Think of the heart-racing chase of *The Hunger Games*, but a giant mall is your arena." -Seventeen.com

NO SAFETY

Four teens.
One bomb.
No escape.

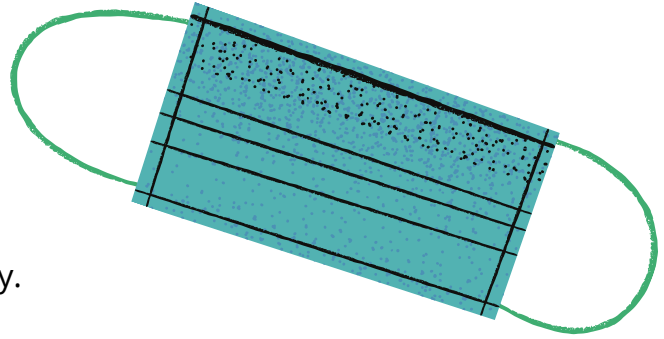


IN NUMBERS

Dayna Lorentz

WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE

All is quiet, and all is dark.
In the wings, I wait, butterflies taking hold;
Heart in my throat.
I step out from my hiding spot,
Head held high, confident smile;
The lights are so bright.

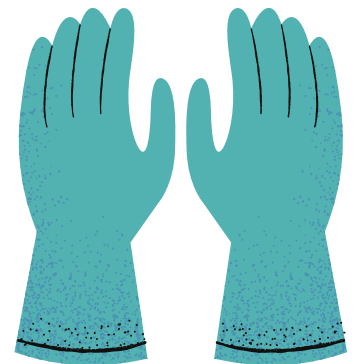


My fingers start to flutter about,
Dancing on the black and white keys,
Butterflies flying away with every note I play.
Before I know it, it is over.
The final chord floats away on a cloud;
I stand triumphantly to take a bow.
But there is no applause.
I straighten up in my living room,
And face the little squares on my screen.

All is quiet, and all is dark;
Camera rolling; audio rolling;
I run my lines over and over in my head.
I step into the frame, but I must stay far away;
My eyes and voice are all I have now,
My lips and nose hide behind a mask.
We used to sing and dance together;
Hands could hold, could shake, could high-5 and high-10.
But our eyes and our voices are all we have.

Where did all the people go?
They were everywhere a while ago;
Crowded theatres and arenas, maskless and carefree.

I have no stage; they've all gone dark.
The magic has left them, and I am alone in my living room.
And yet I am not nearly lonely;
Everything has changed now.
A packed theatre became a video call;
But the magic remains. It is where the people are.



And the people are everywhere.



Excuse me mam.
Why aren't you wearing your
mask? Are you not worried
you'll get Covid-19?

Tshk
Like I'd be afraid
of something that
doesn't exist. Plus if it
did it's not like Death is
walking around killing
people that have it, a
simple cold can't
kill anyone.

B-BUT..
...

NO, NO
Let me
finish





**“NOBODY ACHIEVES ANYTHING
GREAT BECAUSE THEY’RE
HAPPY AND LAZY.”**

- Alex Honnold, rock climber

DURING

I'm sitting at the window, looking out at the street. Nobody's really outside, except for the odd dog walker or family with little kids. It's quiet.

I'm at the grocery store. People greet their friends from afar, staying apart while trying desperately to stick together. Everybody talks about Before or After. Both are so far away.

I'm watching the news. More cases, not likely it'll be easing up any time soon. Another disaster, another problem, some more tragedy. I turn off the news.

I'm texting. My friends are talking about their classes, the most recent disappointment, the small positives. They're so far away. I miss them.

I'm on my phone. I switch between apps, desperate for some form of entertainment. Nothing works. I scroll for hours.

I'm at school. Watching my teacher try to explain the next topic while my dog barks from the room over, as the kettle goes off, as the world falls deeper into despair. I can't focus.

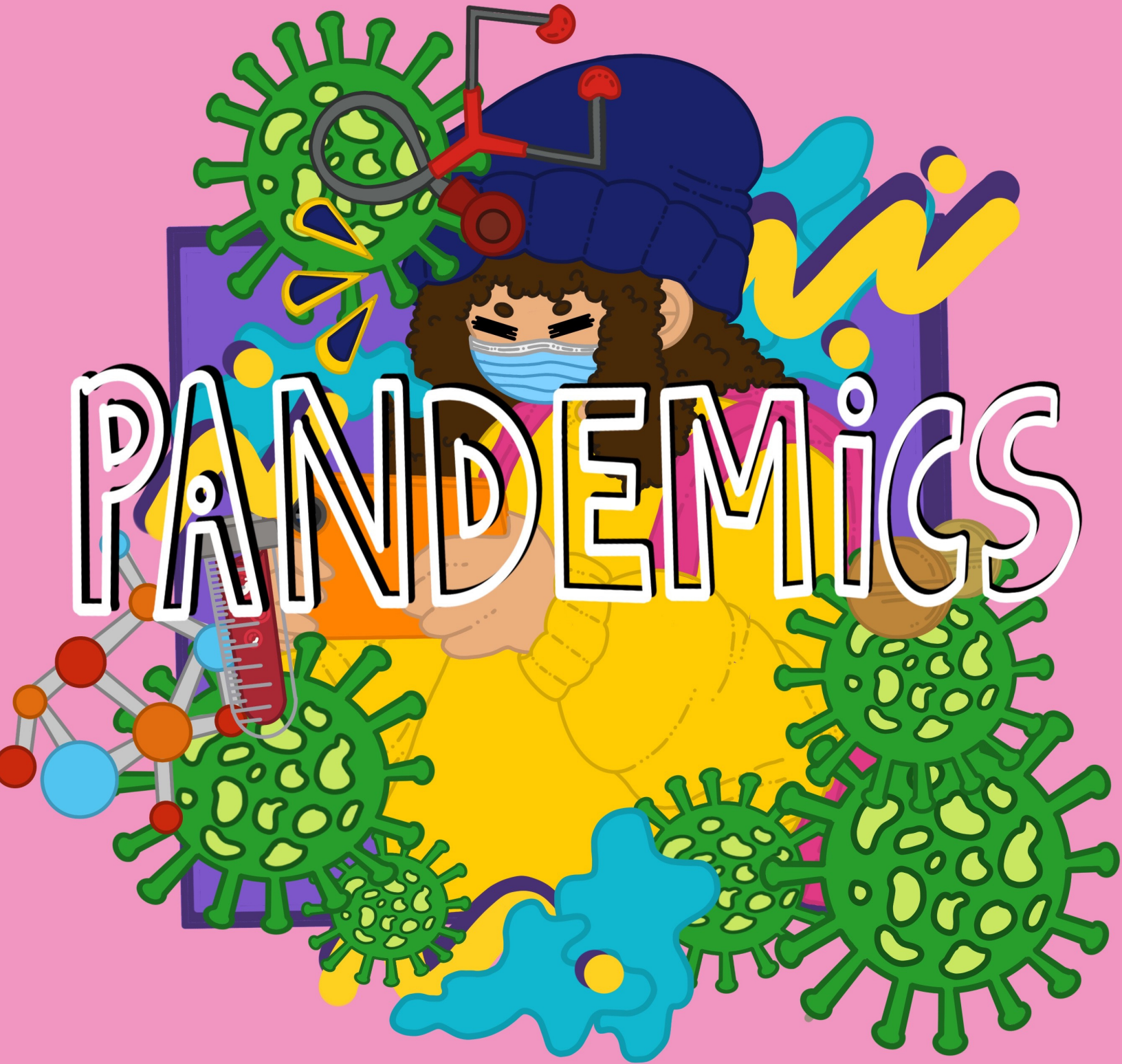
I'm at work. Somebody comes in without a mask. They stand too close. I greet them with crinkled eyes and a cheerful voice. It's a second mask. I am filled with anger.

I'm sitting at the window.

I'm so tired.



PANDEMICs



101 YEARS: A SHORT STORY ABOUT PANDEMICS

Monday, January 6th, 1919

William James, 19:

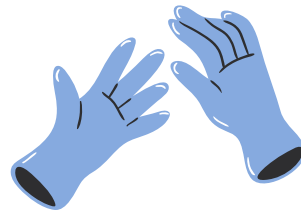
I knew something was wrong when Ma didn't come home in time for dinner. She was always there with us for dinner, no matter what happened earlier on in the day. My brother and I eyed each other, with knowing worry in our thoughts. She has it. There's no other reason why she wouldn't be here. So, we put on our caps and our jackets and walked out the door, in search of our mother.

"Let's head to her office first," I said to my brother.

Once we got there, we asked the first person we saw if they'd seen our mother, Darlene.

"Are you fellas her children? Don't worry. She knew you'd come. She just had a bit of the chills so she thought it would be smart to check in with the doctor." The man who worked here was obviously trying to not worry us. But we both were scared now. The thought of our mother coming down with the Spanish Flu, the worst disease in all of the world, scared me to my core.

We went straight home after that, and I found some cans of soup in the cupboard and warmed them on the woodburning stove. As my brother and I quietly drank our soup, our eyes met. We both knew there was something very wrong going on.



Thursday, January 15th, 1919

William James, 19:

Ma's losing the battle to the flu, and everyone knows it. They try to be polite about it, but we all know the truth. She doesn't have that much more time left. The man at the hospital said she'd be lucky if she lasted a few more weeks. She has trouble breathing now and can't talk all that much. My brother and I come every day to check in on her, and every day there is less and less good news going around.

And it's not like it's just us who are having problems like this. This whole "Spanish Flu" virus is sweeping the nation. I've gotten several letters from family outside of Chicago, and they don't have it any better than we do. It's scary, but I guess that's the way things are going to go. I wouldn't wish this flu on anyone, even Shoeless Joe Jackson*. That's how much I hate this virus.

Sunday, January 24th, 1919

William James, 19:

My mother is gone. She passed with one hand in mine, the other in my brother's. I hope it was peaceful. Honestly, I don't have much of an idea of what I should do from now on. I guess it will just be me and my brother. The pain will linger, but eventually I will move on. And from there, I'm not sure what will happen. Maybe I'll have to work more to pay the bills. Maybe I'll enroll for service. I don't know. The bottom line is that this virus is no laughing matter. I sincerely hope that nothing like this will ever happen again for the whole of eternity for the sake of our nation and for the sake of the world.

Wednesday, April 26th, 2020

Max Marshall, 13:

My family and I went to a museum today. It commemorated the 100th anniversary of something called the influenza pandemic, apparently something that was like what's going on right now. I looked it up on Google before we got here.

As I walked through the exhibit, I looked at the list of people who died during the influenza pandemic. It was really sad. Then, after that, my mom led our family up the stairs of the museum to another segment of the memorial. She skimmed through a few of the names until she found the one she was looking for. "Darlene James. Born March 9th, 1881, deceased Sunday, January 24th, 1919. That was your great-great-great grandmother. And then—" she eyed the memorial, "your great-great grandfather, William James. Born December 16th, 1900, deceased 1974. One of the pivotal figures in the creation of the Influenza or "Spanish Flu" vaccine."

It was a crazy thing to think about. Someone else--someone born over a hundred years older than me-- could resonate with exactly what I was going through. It was a feeling that I couldn't quite explain. I knew that at that exact moment they were both looking down on me and watching out for me. I didn't feel alone anymore.



THE HUMAN STORY

Since long before there was ink or paper,
Letters to words, words to sentences, sentences to paragraphs.
"WHO Declares COVID-19 a Pandemic - March 11th, 2020";
There have been three pandemics since 1900.

From King Hammurabi to medieval English peasants,
The human story was built, word by word, brick by brick - the Great Wall of
humanity.

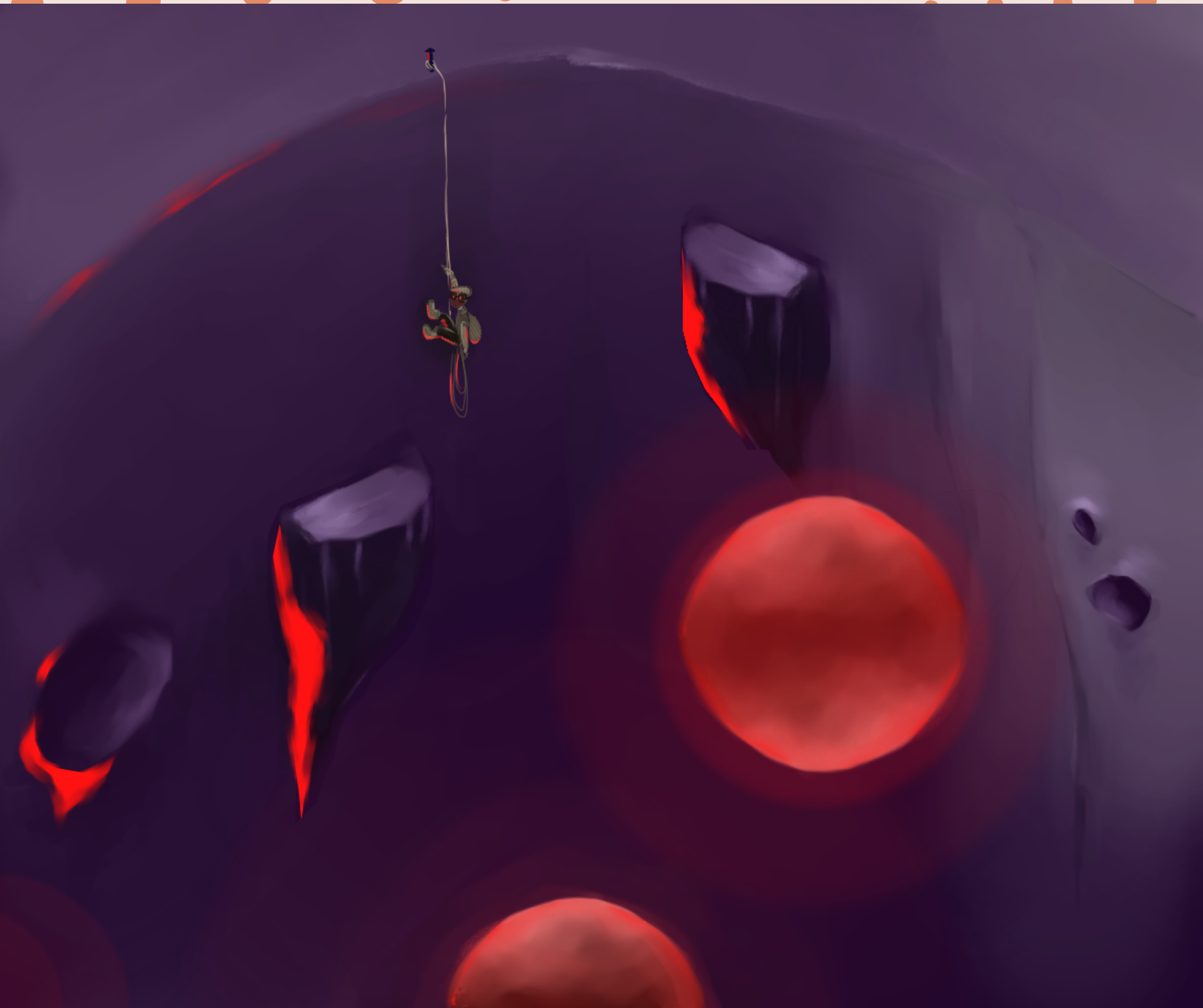
Staring out my bedroom window, wondering... will this ever be over?
The bubonic plague killed around 25 million people.

We feel like single unimportant individuals - mere statistics, and yet
Behind those rising numbers are fathers, mothers, daughters, sons.
First day back to school; everywhere, masked students;
The Antonine Plague lasted for 15 years.

Individuals make up humanity, as words make up stories;
Every individual comes together to write the human story.
Second wave, Capitol raid, new year, new page.
World population: approximately 7.7 billion; 7.7 billion stories.

What will they say?
They'll say what we'll write.
We decide what happens next
In the human story.





During COVID you may feel like you are staring into an abyss, unsure of what awaits. However, you are one of the many brave people that continue traveling deeper. At the bottom of this abyss may lie a new world. A world more beautiful than the one above. You will have endured challenges and grown as a result. But when COVID is over, we will have advanced in our medical field, we will have grown as a united nation, a united globe.

Acknowledgements

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